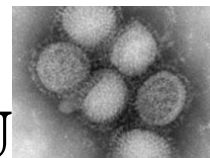




CATAWBA COUNTY

3070 11th Ave. Dr. SE - Hickory, NC 28602 - (828) 695-5800 - Fax (828) 695-4410 - TDD (828) 695-5155

Public Health



FACTS ABOUT H1N1 FLU

What is H1N1 flu?

H1N1 flu (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs. Like all influenza viruses, H1N1 flu viruses change constantly. Pigs can be infected by avian influenza and human influenza viruses as well as H1N1 influenza viruses.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 flu in humans?

The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of seasonal influenza and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

How can human infections with H1N1 flu be diagnosed?

To diagnose H1N1 flu infection, a respiratory specimen (from a nasal swab) would generally need to be collected within the first 4 to 5 days of illness. Identification of H1N1 flu requires sending the specimen for laboratory testing.

How does H1N1 flu spread?

Spread of the H1N1 flu is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

How long can an infected person spread H1N1 flu to others?

People with H1N1 flu infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possible for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick?

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against H1N1 flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.



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- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, you should stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you live in or have traveled to areas where H1N1 flu cases have been identified and become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you may want to contact your health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed. If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.

Resources

- The CDC's swine flu website, <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>, is updated frequently and is the best source for general information.
- Catawba County Public Health may be reached at 828.695.5800 or you may visit the Public Health website at <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth>.
- NC residents may also call the NC Department of Health and Human Services' Care-Line at 800-662-7030 (English/ Spanish) or 877-452-2514 (TTY).



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